GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1532
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2007
NDC MEETING ON AGRICULTURE REFORMS
Mahajan Smt. Sumitra;Mandal Shri Sanat Kumar;Rijiju Shri Kiren;Shukla Smt. Karuna

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether serious concerns have been expressed in the meeting of National Development Council (NDC) held recently in New Delhi over the decreasing agricultural yield due to lack of irrigation facilities and shortage of quality seeds;

(b) if so, the measures discussed in the meeting and suggestions given;

(c) the time by which these suggestions are likely to be implemented along with benefit likely to accrue to the farmers;

(d) whether the Prime Minister has also announced a package of Rs. 25000 crore for agricultural reforms in the meeting of N.D.C;

(e) if so, the details of the package; and

(f) the date by which the package is likely to be provided ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN)

(a): The National Development Council (NDC) in its meeting held on 29th May, 2007 deliberated upon the various issues concerning agriculture including its decreasing yield and the lack of irrigation facilities and other inputs.

(b): After in-depth deliberations the NDC resolved to reorient agricultural development strategies to meet the needs of the farmers and called upon the Central and State Governments to evolve a strategy to rejuvenate Agriculture. A copy of the Resolution adopted by the NDC is enclosed at Annexure.

(c): The suggestions are being implemented during the 11th Five Year Plan. The suggested measures relate to increase in public investment in agriculture, drawing up plans at local levels, improved delivery of inputs and other support services, expansion of irrigation facilities etc; therefore these would address the problems of the farmers more effectively

(d): The Prime Minister has announced a new programme of Rs.25000 crore for the agriculture sector in the NDC meeting.

(e) & (f): Union Ministry of Agriculture has formulated the New Additional Central Assistance (ACA) Scheme of Rs. 25000 crore for Agriculture and Allied Sectors during 11th Five Year Plan. The Central assistance to the States would be provided under the scheme subject to their providing a baseline level of expenditure, and preparation of, from the next year, district agriculture plans. The new ACA scheme aims to incentivise States to draw up plans for their agriculture sector more comprehensively, taking agro-climatic conditions, natural resources and technology into account, and integrating livestock, poultry and fisheries. The assistance under the scheme would be provided to the States from the current year i.e. 2007-08.

Annexure

Annexure as referred to in answer to part (b) in Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.1532

53rd NDC Resolution

The National Development Council resolves that agricultural development strategies must be reoriented to meet the needs of the farmers and calls upon the Central and the State governments to evolve a strategy to rejuvenate agriculture. The NDC reaffirms its commitment to achieve 4 per cent annual growth in the agricultural sector during the 11th plan and, towards this end, resolves that the following steps will be taken by the Central and State Governments:

Actions to be taken by the Central Government

(1) Launch a Food Security Mission covering wheat, rice and pulses as a central scheme aimed at producing over the next four years an additional 8 million tonnes of wheat, 10 million tonnes of rice and 2 million tonnes of pulses over the base year (triennium ending 2006-07).

(2) Introduce a new Additional Central Assistance scheme to incentivise States to draw up plans for their agriculture sector more comprehensively, taking agro-climatic conditions, natural resource issues and technology into account, and integrating livestock, poultry and fisheries more fully. This will involve a new scheme for Additional Central Assistance (ACA) to State Plans, administered by the Union Ministry of Agriculture over and above its existing Centrally Sponsored Schemes, to supplement the State-specific strategies including special schemes for beneficiaries of land reforms. The newly created National Rainfed Area Authority will on request assist States in planning for rainfed areas.

(3) Provide additional resources for irrigation via AIBP, including a component on modernization, linked to adoption of improved participatory irrigation management and command area development. Schemes involving linkages of rivers within a state could also be considered for AIBP.

(4) Give the national agriculture research effort a strategic focus by providing additional resources for the National Strategic Research Fund under the Ministry of Agriculture with a governance and implementation structure appropriate to fund Universities, CSIR laboratories and private institutions besides ICAR. Additional funding will also be provided to support regionally focused research projects in State Agricultural Universities.

(5) Restructure the pattern of RIDF funding by NABARD and replace the present pattern of year by year fund allocation by State-wise indicative allocations for the entire 11th Plan period, which will keep in mind the needs of States with low rural credit-deposit ratios. Activities eligible for funding will be reviewed in the light of the needs identified in State agriculture plans for potential growth areas like horticulture, livestock, poultry and fishery including infrastructure for these areas.

(6) Initiate steps to restructure the fertilizer subsidy programme and its delivery to the farmer, and move to a system that provides balanced plant nutrition without adverse effects on soils. The use of bio-fertilizers, organic manure and micro-nutrients to enhance soil health will be promoted.

(7) Take new initiatives to improve skill development in the farming community, including training of farmers in modern methods of agriculture as well as imparting skills relevant for non-agricultural activity.

Actions to be taken by State Governments:

(1) Formulate District plan for each District that fully utilizes resources available from all existing schemes, State or Central, including resources at the district level from schemes such as BRGF and NREG. The District agricultural plan will include livestock and fishing and be integrated with minor irrigation projects, rural development works and with other schemes for water harvesting and conservation. Each State Government will set up appropriate unit(s) at District level for this purpose.

(2) Prepare a State agricultural plan based on district plans aimed at achieving the State's agricultural growth objective, keeping in view the sustainable management of natural resources and technological possibilities in each agro-climatic region. Each State will ensure that the baseline share of agriculture in its total State Plan expenditure is at least maintained, and upon its doing so, it will be able to access the new ACA to meet the Central contribution to the expenditure on the agricultural plan beyond the base line.

(3) Make special efforts to complete all projects taken up under AIBP without time and cost overrun and prioritize irrigation projects in consonance with their agriculture production targets. States will make special efforts to ensure better water management and enhance water use efficiency.

(4) Accord the highest priority to seed production so that adequate supply of quality seeds of relevant major crops and fodder is available at reasonable prices and at the right time. This is necessary to improve seed replacement rates, which help reduce yield gaps. There should be close liaison between State Governments and State agricultural universities or ICAR institutions for ensuring production of seeds of varieties suitable for each agro climatic region. Public Private partnership between SAUs, State departments concerned and public sector for varietal development can be considered.

(5) Undertake a major expansion and revamping of State agricultural extension systems. This will involve the State Agricultural Universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras; and include support animal resources development, expansion of soil testing capacity in each district and facilities to test input quality. The public-private partnership (PPP) mode should be used wherever possible.

(6) Expedite signing of the MOU (if not done so far) for early implementation of the Vaidyanathan Committee recommendations and set monitorable deadlines for meeting the commitments so that the co-operative credit structure can be revamped.

(7) Encourage development of modern markets by completing the process of amending the APMC Act and notify the rules thereunder, and also encourage development of linkages to markets through a variety of instruments including co-operatives of farmers, contract farming and other means preferred by the States. The process of notifying rules under the amended APMC legislation should be completed during 2007-08.

Concrete proposals to implement these steps will be spelt out in detail as quickly as possible both by the Central Government and by the State Governments.